



making sense of heritage

Somme Road Cycleway Perham Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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February 2016



Somme Road Cycleway Perham Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WYG to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of a new cycleway, at Somme Road, Perham Down, hereafter 'the Route'. The Route extends from National Grid Reference (NGR) 425435, 150250 to 425812 149225. The watching brief was completed over seven separate days (26 August 2015 to 12 October 2015).

Only two archaeological features were encountered during the works, the corner of a modern trench that is likely related to 20th century military activity and a small shallow undated pit, situated close to the former. Both were located within the southern half of the Route, within the present recreation ground.

Following the limited results revealed during full-time archaeological attendance of machine stripping for the southern part of the Route, all parties agreed to proceed with a test pit methodology in order to assess the remainder of the Route where it was located closer to the existing road and military compounds. Five test pits were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision, and although only one encountered disturbed ground, no further archaeological features or deposits were identified.



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Acknowledgements

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The watching brief was undertaken by Simon Flaherty, Mike Dinwiddy, Dave Murdie and Phil Harding. This report was written by Gail Wakeham. Report graphics were prepared by Karen Nicholls. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Simon Cleggett.



Somme Road Cycleway Perham Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by WYG (the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new cycleway at Somme Road, Perham Down, Wiltshire, hereafter 'the Route' (**Figure 1**). The Route extends from National Grid Reference (NGR) 425435, 150250 to 425812,149225.
- 1.1.2 The cycleway works constitute part of permitted development with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) being the relevant authority in this case. It was proposed that the watching brief would be primarily focused where the cycleway crosses the sports pitches and areas of open space, and that the merits of monitoring the verge sides and the former barracks would be kept under review (Holland *pers comm*: email 24/08/15).
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the methodologies and standards set out in a written scheme of investigation (WSI; WA 2015). The WSI was submitted to and approved by Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS), prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.1.4 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken was completed over seven days, between the 26 August to 12 October 2015.

1.2 Route location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Route comprises a narrow linear strip, approximately 2.5 m wide and 1.1 km long, and is generally aligned with Somme Road, Perham Down (on its eastern side) from the A3026 in the north, to Wouldham Close in the south-east (**Figure 1**). The existing land use varied along the route comprising: open recreation ground, roadside verges and some limited areas within former barracks and a tank crossing.
- 1.2.2 The Route crosses gently rolling chalk downland. The northernmost end of the Route lies at an elevation of 136 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) decreasing to approximately 110 m aOD in the south-east.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Cretaceous Seaford Chalk Formation; overlying Quaternary superficial Head deposits - clay, silt, sand and gravel are also recorded (British Geological Survey 2016).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction and previous investigations

- 2.1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been previously undertaken in relation to the military camp at Perham Down (WA 2014a), this details the known archaeological and historical background within the vicinity of the Route, the results of which are briefly summarised below.
- 2.1.2 There is an extensive history of archaeological research within the wider landscape surrounding the military camps on Salisbury Plain. Within the camp itself, a number of small-scale archaeological investigations have also been conducted. Some associated with 21st century development have generally revealed a low density of archaeological features (undated ditches and possible pits), and revealed evidence of modern disturbance and truncation associated with previous phases of camp development (WA 2003 and WA 2013). Although the potential remains for areas of significant archaeological remains to survive between areas of modern disturbance, no archaeologically significant features, deposits or finds were identified during the most recent archaeological fieldwork within Perham Down (monitoring of geotechnical investigations: WA 2014b).
- 2.1.3 As the Route lies immediately to the north-east of the military camp and through less (historically) intensively developed areas there is the potential for the survival of archaeological remains, particularly within open green areas such as within the recreation ground where modern disturbance associated with nearby existing roads (such as service runs) may be less.

2.2 Prehistoric

- 2.2.1 Relatively little direct evidence for prehistoric activity has been found in the vicinity of Perham Down camp. A scheduled monument earthwork on Lamb Down (National List no. 1009833), which consists of a linear bank and ditch lies approximately 600 m to the south-east of the Route, though undated, is considered to be prehistoric in origin. The earthwork is shown on historic maps to have originally run through the area later occupied by the military camp. Archaeological evaluation trenching carried out in 2003 and 2013 within the camp demonstrated that the feature survived as a truncated ditch, although no diagnostic artefacts were recovered to provide secure dating of the feature, some prehistoric worked flint was retrieved (WA 2003; WA 2013). This feature may be associated with other linear cropmarks forming a series of probable late prehistoric land divisions subdividing the gentle promontory that Perham Down camp is located on.
- 2.2.2 Evidence of probable Bronze Age funerary activity is represented from a number of undated round barrows in the wider locality, for example four are recorded to the south of the camp, approximately 0.5 km to the south of the Route. There is no known evidence of contemporary settlement within the desk-based assessment's defined study area.

2.3 Romano-British

- 2.3.1 Romano-British evidence in the vicinity is limited to occasional findspots (mainly of pottery): one such findspot is recorded near the line of the Route. A series of cropmarks suggest ladder enclosure fields to the north-west of the camp that may potentially originate in this period; these cropmarks lie approximately 300 m west of the Route. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was retrieved from a possible shallow pit in one of the 2003 evaluation trenches within the camp, although was not sufficient to securely date the feature (WA 2003).

2.4 Saxon and medieval

- 2.4.1 Evidence for Saxon and medieval occupation of the landscape is slight. However, a single burial of a 'Saxon warrior' with a spearhead and shield boss was excavated within the western part of Perham Down camp in 1939. Later development of the area has not, as yet, revealed any further burials or disturbed grave goods and it is possible that this inhumation was a solitary interment.
- 2.4.2 The Route lies between the settlements of Tidworth and Ludgershall, both are mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 and are known to have had late Saxon origins. The Route likely lay within the agricultural hinterland of these settlements.
- 2.4.3 The name Perham Down is associated with the family of John de Perham, first mentioned in manorial records dating to AD 1281.

2.5 Post-medieval

- 2.5.1 The area of Perham Down retained its agricultural focus into the post-medieval period, with a high proportion of pastoral land use.
- 2.5.2 By 1899, Perham Down was being used as a training area and tented camp by the army. At the outbreak of WWI the large increases of military personnel numbers demanded rapid construction of a series of permanent barracks. Consequently, the tented camp at Perham Down was replaced by a large hutted encampment in 1915 which could provide accommodation for 160 officers and 4,878 Non Commissioned Officer's (NCOs) and men. North-west of the main camp, an additional and larger hutted camp was constructed (possibly to house the Australian 3rd Division). In 1922 the 5th Battalion the Royal Tank Corps were moved to Perham Down and further building of quarters and tank hangars were required.
- 2.5.3 The population of the camp decreased post-WWI, resulting in the demolition of most of the additional hutted encampment to the north-west. With the demolition of the huts and the construction of more permanent facilities, accommodation was available for only 26 officers and 492 NCOs and men. In the 1930s, a building programme focused on replacing the timber and corrugated iron accommodation and further construction for a second tank battalion.
- 2.5.4 The facilities at Perham Down were subsequently altered regularly to accommodate the changing requirements of the Army. In the approach to WWII, two new camps were built between 1938 and 1940 to the north of the existing camp, separated by the north-south Somme Road, these new hutted camps were known as Fowler Barracks and Busigny Barracks and were designed to accommodate 45 officers and 1088 NCOs and men. These were later demolished in 1960 and 1974 respectively.
- 2.5.5 By May 1940, the 5th and 8th Battalions based at Perham Down had departed for France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. A comprehensive redevelopment of Perham Down took place between 1972 and 1974 including the large-scale demolition of the former camp and complete redesign of the newly named Swinton Barracks. Subsequent development of Perham Down has seen the construction of a number of large utility buildings on previously undeveloped land to the north-west.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the investigations as defined in the WSI (WA 2015) were to:

- to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
- to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present; and
- to prepare a report on the results of the archaeological investigations.

4 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out within the WSI (WA 2015) and in compliance with the standards outlined in the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a) except where they are superseded by statements made below.

4.1.2 A summary of the relevant sections of the WSI is provided below.

4.2 Health and Safety

4.2.1 Health and safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices will override archaeological considerations at all times. All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992*, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

4.2.2 WA supplied a copy of their Health and Safety Policy and a Risk Assessment to the Client before the commencement of any fieldwork. The Risk Assessment was read and understood by all staff attending the Route before any groundwork commenced. The groundwork contractor was responsible for the identification and protection of any above- and below-ground services within the groundwork area.

4.3 Watching brief methodology

4.3.1 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of intrusive ground works associated with the proposed cycleway. This comprised full-time archaeological monitoring during excavations in the southern part of the Route where the Route crossed open land. Following consideration of the results of this, it was agreed by all parties to test the potential of the remainder of the Route through the excavation of archaeological test pits, located by the present roadside and military compounds.

4.3.2 The watching brief was undertaken by at least one experienced archaeologist subject to the number of site operations being undertaken at any one time. The mechanical excavation was, where possible, undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket and under constant supervision by WA. Machine excavation proceeded to the required construction levels or the top of archaeological levels whichever was the higher. Where necessary and practicable and without causing unreasonable delay to the groundwork programme, groundworks were halted whilst investigations were carried out by WA staff.

- 4.3.3 WA staff investigated archaeological deposits and features through excavation (by hand) and recording commensurate with the scale of work and using WA's *pro forma* recording system. Where practical, and towards meeting the aims of the watching brief, excavation included sampling of features and deposits in order to determine stratigraphic relationships and to recover artefacts, ecofacts and dating evidence. Recording included written, drawn, and photographic elements as conditions allowed. Archaeological features and deposits were surveyed using a Total Station/GPS and related to Ordnance Survey.
- 4.3.4 When required, arrangements were put in place with the Client in order for WCAS to access the Route to monitor progress of the watching brief. The watching brief was maintained throughout groundwork excavations and was concluded when, in consultation with the WCAS and the Client, it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted.

4.4 Artefacts and ecofacts

Introduction

- 4.4.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery of artefacts and environmental samples were in line those outlined in the WSI (WA 2015). Where necessary, specialist advice was sought from WA in-house Finds and Environmental Specialists, and if appropriate from the English Heritage Scientific Advisor.
- 4.4.2 The treatment of artefacts and environmental samples is in accordance with the ClfA's *Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (ClfA 2014b).

Finds

- 4.4.3 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts were retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit. All retained artefacts were, as a minimum, processed, sorted, quantified, identified, assessed and reported on by WA in-house specialists.
- 4.4.4 Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions were dealt with immediately in line with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998). X-raying and storing of any metalwork and other delicate objects was undertaken by WA in-house conservation staff, or another approved conservation centre.
- 4.4.5 Recovered artefacts were suitably bagged and boxed in general accordance with the ClfA's guidance (ClfA 2014b) and the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines no. 2 (UKIC 2001).
- 4.4.6 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the Route are the property of the landowner. On completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme and with the permission of the landowner it is anticipated that any artefacts will be deposited with the relevant museum.

Environmental sampling

- 4.4.7 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were uncovered during this watching brief.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of intrusive ground works associated with the proposed cycleway (**Figure 1**). This comprised full archaeological monitoring during excavations in the southern half of the Route where the Route crossed open land. Following consideration of the limited results of this (one modern trench and one undated pit were uncovered), it was agreed by all parties to test the potential of the remainder of the Route through the excavation of five archaeological test pits, located by the present roadside and military compounds both in the far north of the Route, as well as at the southern extent. These revealed no further archaeological features or deposits, despite only one discovering disturbed or made ground, and therefore it was agreed by all parties that the watching brief should be terminated.
- 5.1.2 The results of the watching brief are described below and context descriptions are tabulated in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Soil sequence

- 5.2.1 The soil sequence was broadly similar across Site. The underlying natural geology was a bedded Chalk, and the overlying topsoil was shallow, consisting of a dark brown silty clay loam topsoil approximately 0.25 m thick.
- 5.2.2 In one of the test pits excavated in the northern part of the Route, by the roadside and the perimeter of an existing army compound, disturbed made ground was encountered and a metal cover overlying a fibre optic service trench was revealed (**Plate 1**).

5.3 Features and deposits

- 5.3.1 Only two features were discovered during the watching brief, both were located in the southern half of the Route (**Figure 1**). The right-angled corner of a modern ditch or trench (**505**) was partly revealed within the machine stripped area. It was investigated by hand and found to contain a single deposit, likely a deliberate dump, comprising a poorly sorted mid-dark brown silty loam with a concentration of flint inclusions along the lower boundary (**504**) from which a modern enamelled plate, three nails and a shoe polish style round tin were recovered, along with a single sherd of glazed redware. The feature was shallow at the corner (0.19 m deep) and had very straight edges in plan, which may suggest it was originally excavated by machine (**Plates 2 and 3**). In section, it is clear that the trench feature also contained a dumped layer of redeposited chalk (**502**) and thin burnt deposit (**503**), which overlay deposit **504** (**Plate 3**).
- 5.3.2 A nearby small pit (**507**) was circular in plan with moderate concave sides and a concave base, measuring 0.5 m in diameter and 0.15 m deep. It contained a single mid brown silty clay fill with rare flint inclusions (**506**) from which no artefacts were recovered.

6 ARTEFACTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Finds

- 6.1.1 Finds were recovered only from context **504**, and comprised a single small sherd of glazed redware, of 18th century date or later, and a small collection of metal objects, including three nails, the remains of an enamel plate, and a small, flat, circular tin. All these are likely to be of relatively recent date, probably related to 20th century military activity.

6.2 Environmental

- 6.2.1 No environmental samples were taken during this watching brief as no suitable well sealed and dated deposits were uncovered.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The archaeological watching brief along the Route of the proposed cycle path uncovered only two features of very limited archaeological significance, comprising the corner of a modern trench that likely relates to 20th century military activity and a nearby small shallow undated pit.
- 7.1.2 Considering the results of the archaeological watching brief, no further work is proposed.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 It is recommended that the finds and archive be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum on completion of the project, however the museum is currently not accepting archaeological archives. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 Preparation and deposition of archive

- 8.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the local museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code (110670), and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
- *1 files/document cases of paper records*
- 8.2.3 The archive is currently temporarily stored at the offices of WA in Salisbury.

8.3 OASIS record

- 8.3.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Wiltshire historic environment record (HER). This will include an uploaded pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

8.4 Security Copy

- 8.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.
- 8.4.2 The digital records will be submitted to the HER, with a copy retained in the WA security-copied and backed-up digital archive storage facility, under its designated WA project code 110670.

8.5 Discard policy

- 8.5.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (SMA 1993) which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 8.5.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

8.6 Storage of materials and archives

- 8.6.1 No charge will be made for the temporary storage of finds or archives during the period when WA are undertaking analysis or report preparation.
- 8.6.2 However, if, after completion and submission of the report, finds and archives cannot be deposited with the relevant museum due to circumstances beyond WA's control, a charge will be made for storage.
- 8.6.3 A charge for storage may also be made where a delay is caused by a lack of confirmation of post-fieldwork analyses and report, if the delay exceeds three months.

8.7 Copyright

- 8.7.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by WA under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with all rights reserved. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations* 2003.

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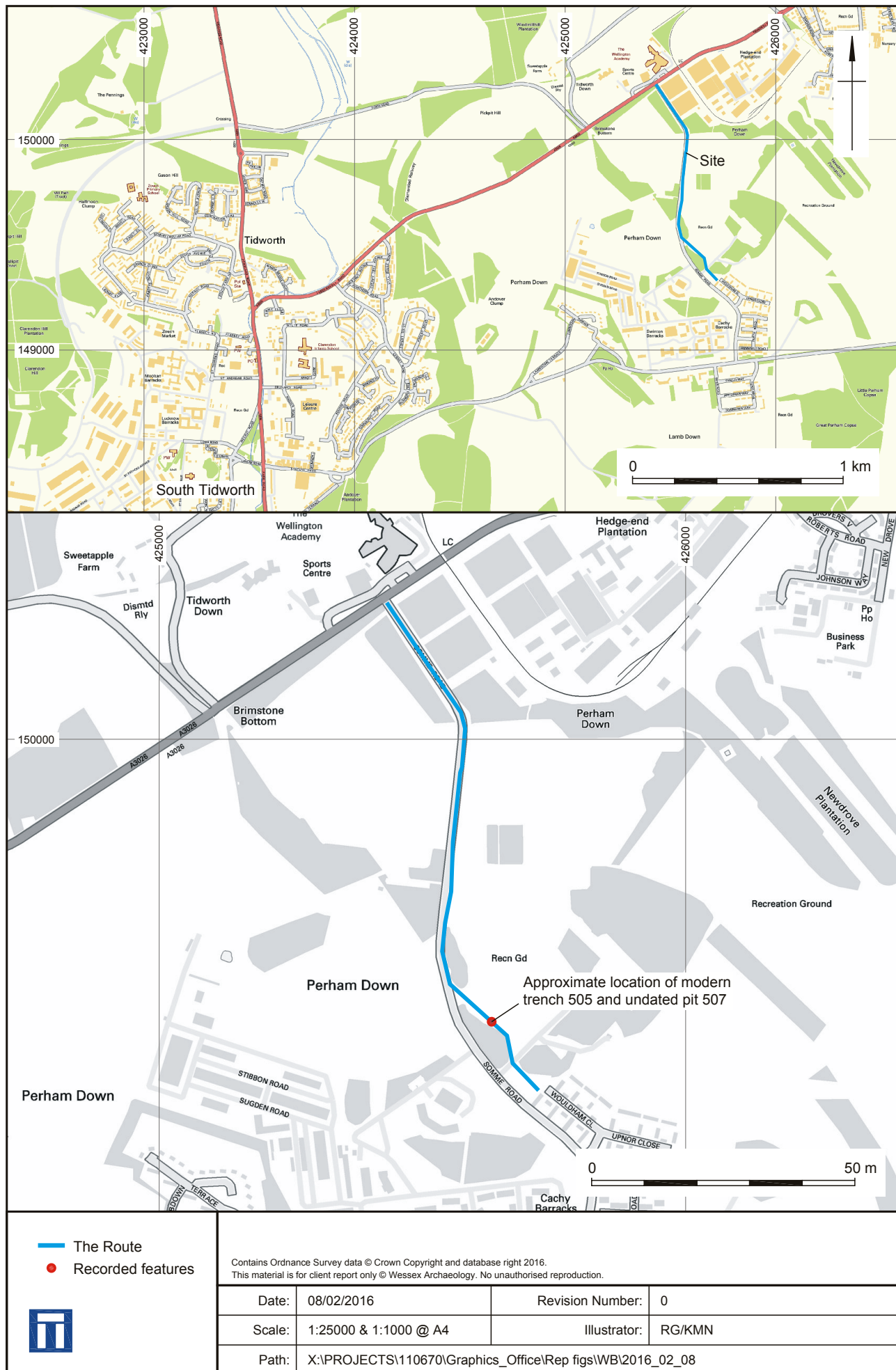
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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: context summary

Context no.	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m)
500	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown silty clay loam	Approx. 0.25
501	Natural	Natural bedded chalk	-
502	Dumped layer	Redeposited chalk, seen in section above 503	-
503	Dumped layer	Thin carbon-rich deposit in top of 505	-
504	Fill	Mid-dark brown silty clay with poorly sorted flint	0.19
505	Ditch/Trench	Cut of corner of modern ditch or trench	0.19
506	Fill	Secondary fill of pit 507, mid-light brown silty clay with rare flint	0.15
507	Pit	Cut of undated small pit	0.15



Location of proposed cycle path

Figure 1



Plate 1: Working shot of machine excavation of test pit at northern end the Route by roadside, showing made ground with metal cover over fibre optic service



Plate 2: View of corner of excavated modern trench 505 and undated pit 507 within stripped area



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Plate 3: South-west facing section through modern trench 505



Plate 4: West facing section through undated pit 507

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